

Attorney General Files Civil Rights Complaint Against Local Teens

By PAULA MAXWELL

Two Duxbury teens charged with hate crimes violation now face a civil rights complaint from State Attorney General Tom Reilly.

The Attorney General's Civil Rights Office filed the complaint in Plymouth Juvenile Court last Wednesday for the alleged bias attack on a Jewish teacher's home.

A third teenager also faces civil rights complaints, but was not charged under the state hate crime statute, according to Duxbury Police Sergeant Chris Mori.

"We must guarantee all citizens the right to be safe in their homes regardless of their religion and which holidays they celebrate," said Reilly in a press statement last week. "We will be vigilant in using every available resource to protect people from becoming victims of crimes motivated by hateful prejudice. We must continue to teach our young citizens that acts of hate are unacceptable."

Reilly's office is seeking a preliminary injunction against the teenagers to prevent them from inflicting further harm on the victims or others, said

Suzanne Gilfix, an assistant attorney general.

The injunction sought by the attorney general is a more serious tool than a restraining order, according to Gilfix. A violation of the injunction could result in criminal charges, and a maximum sentence of 10 years if bodily injury results.

"There is recidivism amongst hate crime offenders. We want to ensure that this is a remedy that will deter them from doing this again. [An injunction] is the only way to pro-

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tect everyone else in Duxbury from similar conduct," Gilfix said.

The family who were the victims were dramatically affected by this, said Gilfix. "It's pretty horrifying ...I can't imagine a clearer case of bias motivation," she said.

Assistant Plymouth County District Attorney Jim Sullivan, who is handling the criminal complaints in Plymouth juvenile court, said he did not know why the A.G.'s office filed the civil rights complaint.

"The girls were ordered to stay away from the victim at their arraignment," Sullivan said.

A pre-trial conference on charges against the teenagers is pending in Plymouth Juvenile Court. They were charged with violation of the state's hate crime statute, larceny, malicious damage of property over \$250, and possession of an unlicensed (paintball) air gun.

Sullivan said that evidentiary burdens are higher in criminal cases than for civil rights standards, where the preponderance of evidence is the standard.

Russell Hodgdon, an attorney representing one of the teenagers charged in the incident said Tuesday, "This is a colossal waste of governmental resources and a horrible example of overkill.

"This attempt by the Attorney General's office to get an injunction will be aggressively defended against."

Hodgdon said the kids and their families have already suffered more than anyone can imagine. "They are going through a living hell. This is not an example of swastikas or real tangible overt signs. This was not that. These girls were already under the imposed 'stay away' order. The A.G.'s action is superfluous and redundant."

A hearing on the preliminary injunction will be held on Monday, Feb. 14.